



Lakefront Development Advisory Commission

To: Committee on Parks, Energy and Environment
From: Lakefront Development Advisory Commission
CC: Sue Black, Director, Department of Parks, Recreation and Culture
Friends of Bradford Beach
Date: 4/19/2007
Re: Friends of Bradford Beach Watergarden Proposal – LDAC
Recommendation

Project Description

The proposed Bradford Beach Watergarden project is a series of long, low benches made out of cut stones and shaped concrete that would be erected on the south end of Bradford Beach, adjacent to the North Point parking lot. Visitors would pump water from wells drilled downed eighty feet to the aquifer. The water would stream through the benches and eventually back into the ground.

In addition, a sand feature constructed from large, wooden timbers would be built near the benches to provide a play area for children. It is the intent of the Friends of Bradford Beach to renew the public's interest in the lakefront, as a place for family enjoyment, by undertaking this project.

Analysis

The Friends of Bradford Beach (Friends) requested that the Lakefront Development Advisory Commission (LDAC) review their proposal for the Watergarden project and a public hearing was subsequently scheduled for December 6, 2007. The Friends presented their project to LDAC and members of the public at that meeting. The public comment period remained open until December 18, 2006. The Chairman of LDAC forwarded all comments to commission members and the Friends of Bradford Beach for their response.

At its January 16, 2007 meeting, LDAC discussed the key questions raised by the public and commissioners during the public comment period. The six main concerns were:

1. Financial feasibility of the project
2. Ability to raise the necessary funds
3. Project maintenance, including long-term
4. Protection/Enhancement of the shoreline
5. Effect of project on changing lake water levels
6. Erosion of project's materials caused by water/sand

LDAC debated whether the maintenance issues should be its concern because maintenance is not part of the established criteria. After some debate, it was determined that it was in the best interest of the Friends, and ultimate approval of the project, to address the maintenance concerns prior to asking for county approval.

There were also some concerns that the project may not be family-friendly. However, LDAC members also noted that the project should be contrasted with the present condition of the site and the unlikelihood Milwaukee County would have funding of its own to enhance it. The project will be funded strictly by private donations and will not require a county commitment.

LDAC ultimately concluded that the project met all of the established criteria in order for it to be considered by Milwaukee County's Committee on Parks, Energy and Environment. The criteria considered are outlined below:

1. Complies with current laws and regulations including the Public Trust Doctrine.
2. Encourages active and passive recreation. The Watergarden may be enjoyed interactively through the water pumps and sand features or passively by sitting on the benches and enjoying the beauty of the lakefront.
3. Preserves the natural beauty of the lakefront by stabilizing the shoreline and enhancing the natural features of the area including the existing tree line and beach area.
4. Recognizes unique opportunity for recreating at the beachfront.
5. Provides access to the shoreline by stabilizing the area and providing an interactive space that is a transitional point between the North Point parking lot and Bradford Beach.

Because there were not enough members present, LDAC decided to schedule another meeting to vote on the project. Additionally, the Parks Department agreed to work with the Friends in order to address the maintenance and cost/ benefit issues raised during the public comment period. Any remaining questions were to be answered by the Friends prior to the next meeting.

At its February 5, 2007 meeting, the Lakefront Development Advisory Commission received documentation from the Parks Department (memo dated February 5, 2005) that Parks staff met with the Friends and concluded the need for a \$100,000 maintenance endowment to ensure ongoing project maintenance. Upon conclusion

of discussing the Department's findings, a motion was made by Commissioner Tom Frenn to approve the Friends of Bradford Beach Watergarden project because it met the aforementioned criteria and the Friends agreed to raise \$100,000 for the maintenance endowment. The vote was 11-1 with Supervisor Lynne De Bruin casting the "no" vote.

Recommendation

Based on its careful analysis and review of the Watergarden project, as presented by the Friends of Bradford Beach, the Lakefront Development Advisory Commission recommends that the Committee on Parks, Energy and Environment approve the project for implementation.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Lakefront Development Advisory Commission,

William H. Lynch,
Chairman

WHL/je